Mystery of Kitchener's War Record: Lansing Weighs Diplomats

Kitchener and His Failure to Meet the Crises of the War

A Comrade of Britain's Great War Lord Explains the Latter's Attitude Toward War Problems

By Samuel Abbott

THE TRAGEDY OF LORD KITCHENER. By Reginald Viscount Esher. Published by E. P. Dutton & Co. $2.

"MASSIVE, impenetrable, four-square, he was summoned by the unanimous voice of his fellow countrymen to meet, as best he could, that hurricane, as Lord Morley called it, of destruction and hate that swept quietness out of the world." In these words Viscount Esher pictures Kitchener when, at the outset of the war, he was called to conduct England's armies to victory. What untoward circumstances or affairs of his own mentality conspired to cause him to fade as an image of leadership, with the progress of the struggle?

Esher goes back, in his quest for the primary reasons for Kitchener's inadequacy in moments of grave national peril, to a phase of his life as a schoolboy. He tells us that the youth, in spite of his scientific training and his genuine love for figures, revealed a mind with ragged edges, "which led to the confusion of his own ideas and to chaos in much that he undertook." Wordsworth's dictum that the child is father of the man seems to apply to Kitchener, whose abilities in the handling of simple problems of strategy and tactics were ample for all demands and accidents; witness his superb efficiency in the stroke at the Mahdi. Esher's prose in illuminating this episode in Kitchener's career is of the order of history at its concise best—"when he thought of war it was after the manner of Darius—slow-moving hordes concentrating slowly upon their objectives with fatal method. He took no heed of the lightning-stroke of Napoleon. He revelled in the making of the desert railway, in the accumulation of vast stores, in the processions of men, ordered like an Egyptian frieze. The battles of the Atbara and Omdurmun were episodes, inevitable but tiresome."

The man who could meet successfully the difficulties of war compressed into small areas and who always had been granted time to perfect plans of coming operations in the field was expected in 1914 to be able to shift his views and conceptions over to the huge terrain of a war waged on lines almost utterly foreign to the knowledge of the British War Office. And Kitchener was no longer the alert, quick-minded soldier of the days of Khartoum. There was in him a certain British rigidity that prevented his bending to reach out and take up suggestions of immediate value, chance hints and shrewd guesses as to the probable course the war would assume.

Kitchener was in a trying position at the outset. The idol of the people, a wave of whose hand meant an impulse in recruiting, he sat at a table with men who were able and willing to question his motive and his judgment. There was, too, the insidious ribbon of red tape, gradually twining him and his colleagues in coils of military precedent and procedure.

Kitchener often put a finger on the critical spot on the map, for instance, certain battle-phases of the French front. But this chance stab at truth was blurred in effect by his blindness as to the need of guns and ammunition. To a marked degree the old school dominated in London, while Paris, sensing menace, had kept pace with the development of the machinery of war on lines that travelled with those of Berlin. When the hour came for coalescing the mental and mechanical equipments of the two channel countries Britain's adherence to a rapidly fading page of war history was a fetter that impeded simultaneous and aggressive advance shoulder to shoulder. There were British officers at the front who had their eyes opened to the danger of dilatory acceptance of new conditions and new provisions, but they seldom got a vivid word through to the little group in control.

On November 6, 1915, Kitchener lunched with Gallieni. It is significant, the fact that he was at this date made acquainted for the first time with French methods of repelling air attacks, then unknown in England. Later, in the dingy room he occupied at the top of the British Embassy, he stood with his back to the fire while letters from Sir John Cowans and Sir Herbert Creedy were read to him. There was an interval of silence. Then, after mentioning the dislike felt for him by his colleagues, he said: "Asquith is my only friend." His eyes were full of tears. "I am an old man, and I cannot change my habits. It is too late."

On the next page of this book we have the whole matter of Kitchener and the war summarized in a paragraph: "He was well aware that the mass of his countrymen, all the world over, believed in his disinterested patriotism and strong-handed grasp of the war's essential meaning, and that they, with the King at their head, trusted in his leadership. The common people were not concerned with the Fabian processes, the mediocre reasoning, the stolid approach to obvious conclusions, which irritated his colleagues. These unhappy qualities destroyed the admiration, the affection, almost the respect, which the statesmen and politicians, who were his closest colleagues and the companions of his task, once had felt for him.

The Background Book for the Arms Conference

THE PACIFIC TRIANGLE

By SYDNEY GREENBIE

PROBLEMS of the Pacific will be most important at the international conference soon to be held in Washington. This book, which has just come from the presses, deals with the lands and the millions of peoples, white and brown and yellow, of the entire Pacific region. It will be indispensable during the conference and during the discussions of Pacific affairs which will continue for months afterwards. Besides, it is a fascinating narrative of travel and keen observation, based on six years of wandering among the Pacific peoples. (Published by The Century Co., 353 Fourth ave., New York City, and sold at all bookstores for $4.00.)

Two Puritans

New England Characters Featured in Fiction

By Honoré Willsie

THE CAREER OF DAVID NOBLE. By Frances Parkinson Keyes, author of "The Enchanted Canyon," etc. Published by Frederick A. Stokes Company.

HERE is the story of an ambitious New England boy, who partly through brain and will power and partly through good luck becomes a famous surgeon at the age at which most doctors are scarcely out of medical school. He is ruthless, self-centered, priggish, puritanical and exceedingly good to look upon.

David earns the first money for his college career by working for some five years as stable boy for Mr. Huntington, the rich man of his native village. Jacqueline is the granddaughter of Mr. Huntington, whose ne'er-do-well son married a French ballet dancer. Both the wayward son and the dancer died, leaving the baby Jacqueline to the grandfather. She is a little younger than David and is an altogether charming heroine.

The plot of the story is built on the love of David and Jacqueline for each other and on the remaking of David through his love, which changes him from a brilliant and priggish mechanician to an unselfish and devoted human being.

The action of the story moves from a village in Vermont to London, to rural England, to Paris, to a French village and to Nice. There are many dramatic situations very well handled, as for example the chapters devoted to Jacqueline's serious automobile accident and David's sacrifice in bringing her back to life, which hold one intensely. The part of the plot which is enacted abroad is deftly, even thrillingly, handled. But easily the best part of "The Career of David Noble" is found in the chapters dealing with New England small town life. Mrs. Keyes pictures the men and women and children of Hamstead with a masterly hand. The humor, the pathos, the austerity and the intelligence of these people could have been pictured thus only by one who knew them well and who had talent fine enough to put them on paper so that they live and breathe.

David's mother is a bit of character portrayal any author could have been proud of producing. We only wish she could have been carried throughout the book. David's young sister, Susie, is convincingly and delightfully drawn, and we can't help wishing that we knew Jacqueline's French grandmother better. Jacqueline herself is human and charming.

Some day we hope Mrs. Keyes will give us an all New England story. Most New England stories are too plotless. But with Mrs. Keyes's keen eye for the dramatic situation, her capital sense of humor, her ready fund of sympathy, she could tell us a tale of a Vermont town that we all would relish. And if it is as good a love story as "The Career of David Noble" it will carry her far on her literary road.

A Great Menace

PROSTITUTION IN THE UNITED STATES. By Howard B. Woolston, Ph. D. Published by the Century Company. $2.50.

THIS is the first of two volumes which will cover the whole history of prostitution in this country from Colonial times to the present, especial attention being given to health conditions among our men during the World War. The dangers of this form of vice, both to the individual and to the state, are not glossed over in these pages. Statistics are marshaled in rank and file to demonstrate the appalling degredation and suffering that follow in the trail of the foul habits and disease that accompany this trade. A book for social workers and for medical, legislative and judicial officials, yet with a lesson for the nation at large.

ONE of many delightful illustrations in Eleanor C. Price's "Stories from French History" (Dodd Mead)

Octet of National Leaders in Book on Peace Conference

Robert Lansing Gives Personal Opinions of Men Who Made World History in Paris Meetings

By William L. McPherson

THE BIG FOUR AND OTHERS AT THE PEACE CONFERENCE. By Robert Lansing. The Houghton Mifflin Company. Price, $2.50.

LAST spring, about the time when Mr. Lansing's critical review of the peace conference—"The Peace Negotiations"—appeared, he contributed to "The Saturday Evening Post" sketches of the four conference leaders—Clemenceau, Wilson, Lloyd George and Orlando. These sketches are pieced out in this volume with estimates of four other conference figures—Venizelos, Emir Feisul, General Botha and Paderewski.

The author gives Clemenceau first place in the Council of Four, calling him the "dominant figure" and the strongest man of the many strong men at Paris. Clemenceau showed extraordinary adroitness, Mr. Lansing thinks, in maneuvering Wilson out of the presidency of the conference and then in persuading him to sit as an ordinary delegate at the peace table, instead of holding aloof and reserving freedom to pass on decisions reported to him by the other American commissioners. After that false step, Mr. Lansing thinks, Wilson ceased to be an element of danger to those who wanted to shape the gathering to their own nationalistic purposes.

French opinion hasn't accepted Mr. Lansing's judgment that Clemenceau succeeded at the conference "in nearly everything he undertook." France is deeply dissatisfied with the treaty. Clemenceau was defeated for the Presidency and retired to private life. The value of the guaranties he obtained for his countrymen is still being violently debated. Mr. Lansing puts a low estimate on Lloyd George, holding that the latter's manifest faults as a politician quite obscured his achievements as an international statesman. Yet Lloyd George, alone of the Big Four, survived the peace settlement. And he survived because he obtained for Great Britain at Paris nearly everything he went there to obtain: "The cession of the principal German colonies in Africa and the German islands in the Pacific south of the equator, control of Mesopotamia, a protectorate over Egypt, a practical protectorate over Persia in the event that Persian affairs came before the conference, the destruction of the German naval power and the elimination of the German merchant marine as a rival to Great Britain in the carrying trade of the world." Ask almost any Frenchman to read this list drawn up by Mr. Lansing and say who did better for his own country at Paris—Lloyd George or Clemenceau.

Mr. Wilson brought home a League of Nations covenant which the United States didn't want. Mr. Lansing has told in his other book how bad from his point of view the Versailles Treaty was and how faulty Mr. Wilson's conduct of the negotiations was. In this volume he sums up in the following nine paragraphs the reasons for the President's failure:

"1. The loss of his superior position by intimate personal intercourse with the European statesmen, which could have been avoided if he had remained in the United States or if he had declined to sit as a delegate at Paris.

"2. His evident lack of experience as a negotiator and his failure to systematize the work of the American commission and to formulate a program.

"3. His seclusiveness and apparent determination to conduct personally almost every phase of the negotiations and to decide every question alone and independently.

"4. His willingness to arrange all settlements behind closed doors with the three other heads of states present at the conference.

"5. His unavoidable lack of knowledge of the details of some of the simple as well as the intricate problems to be solved.

"6. His insistence on the adoption of the covenant of the League of Nations, as drafted, and the overcoming of opposition by concessions to national aspirations the justice of which was at least disputable.

"7. His loss of the initiative in the formulation of the provisions of the treaties.

"8. His apparent abandonment of the smaller nations and his tacit denial of the equality of nations by consenting to the creation of an oligarchy of the great powers at the conference and, in a modified form, in the covenant.

"9. The impression, which greatly increased after his return from the United States in March, that the American people were not a unit in support of his aims as to a league of nations as those aims were disclosed by the report made to the peace conference."

Mr. Lansing is moderate. He might have formulated five more points.

A Year of the League

THE FIRST YEAR OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS. By George Grafton Wilson. Published by Little, Brown & Co. $1.25.

OUT of a mass of material in the shape of council and committee reports, Professor Wilson, of Harvard, has prepared a succinct statement of the actual achievements of the first year of the League of Nations. To the average American, remote from the fields of the league's activities, this book will be something of a revelation. Particularly stirring to any man who appreciates at its true value any effort to eliminate war and establish a world community of allied peoples, are the excerpts from the speeches of President Motta and Monsieur Hymans.

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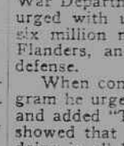
The GREAT DECEPTION



Bringing Into the Light the Real Meaning and Mandate of the Harding Vote as to Peace

By Samuel Colcord

An unusual writer who writes only in great crises and whose articles, thus written, whether in magazine or pamphlet, have each and every one struck fire, and seemed to do something.

William Allen White, four leading university presidents, a conspicuous member of the McKinley and Roosevelt Cabinets, and other nationally known men united in a letter to President Harding requesting that "as a supplement to your conferences with leading minds" he read the Author's "Letter to the Friends of World Peace" (a brief treatise in line with The Great Deception), and added that no one was better qualified to present the subject.

Mr. Colcord has consented to let Edwin Ware and Charles H. Richards advertise his book in their own way without interference, provided they keep within the facts. Accepting the trust they present the following:

THE AUTHOR'S HITS

BY HIS ONE TIME VOLUNTEER SECRETARY

ONE of the most world famous and important acts in recent American Statesmanship (which happened to relate to the peace question), was undertaken and carried out in almost strict conformity with this author's advice in letters to the principal actors, as is attested in a letter by an American statesman whose world influence is second to none, and sustained by other reliable evidence. But irreconcilable interference slipped a cog in the wheel, much impairing its usefulness. To name it and tell the entire story would excite great interest.

His "Join the Allies," published in The Outlook and earlier in different form in five articles in the New York Herald, shortly before we entered the war, brought letters and telegrams from all over the country from men of prominence, including Roosevelt. Many of them urged that his articles be reprinted and sent to members of Congress and the Cabinet and to other national leaders. This was done while messages were still pouring in to urge it. The remarkable influence they later attributed to it will be told in another issue.

A like response followed the magazine publication of his "German-Russian Peace." A prominent citizen ordered by wire a reprint of ten thousand copies and mailed them to leaders of thought all over the world. One was sent by the author to Viscount Northcliffe with the playful threat that if he survived the reading he might receive the author's pamphlet on the subject. To this Northcliffe replied: "I have not only survived the perusal but I am longing for the pamphlet." One was sent to Lord Robert Cecil, who four months later startled the world by saying in a London speech. "If Germany is allowed to gain complete commercial and industrial hold on Russia, she can fight the world for ever"—exactly the contention of this article. Three other big things happened to this publication, but lack of space forbids the telling.

His pamphlet, "A Supreme Effort to Win the War," published in the crisis of 1918, is another instance. Its importance was acknowledged in letters from Woodrow Wilson, General Crowder, Col. House, Senator Wadsworth and others, the thanks of the War Department, an invitation from Mr. Baruch, Chairman of the War Industries Board, to come to Washington and a Washington dinner in his honor. But its most remarkable endorsement was in the complete reversal within eight weeks of the War Department's war program in exact conformity with the program he urged with unanswerable logic—the immediate creation of an army of six million men, four millions to be on the firing line in France and Flanders, and two millions at home for training, reinforcement and defense.

When complimented on this prompt reversal and adoption of the program he urged the author made light of it as "an interesting coincidence," and added "The German offensive did it." Perhaps it did, but at least it showed that he guessed exactly right, as he seems to have the habit of doing in all his writings. What President Wilson wrote was: "I assure you that I appreciate to the full the considerations which you so effectually urge."

That pamphlet would make absorbingly interesting reading even now, but only the great men of the nation ever saw it. The fine diplomacy and irresistible common sense with which it won the approval and praise of the very men whose official decisions it questioned should give it rank as a great diplomatic paper. Instance this compliment: "We are doing splendidly and know that we are. We were doing fairly well last Spring and thought we were doing all we could, but when the German offensive told us it was a case of life and death we doubled the achievement. We can double it again if there is need. Is there the need?" But far beyond its consummate diplomacy was the reasoned presentation of an irresistible array of facts which compelled the mind to admit that there was the need. There was no impolitic hammering. Witness this: "To ask is to show faith in the ability of this administration to do great things." Like fine diplomacy will be found in every chapter of The Great Deception. That shown in the last chapter will justify in the mind of any man who himself possesses qualities of statesmanship the references to his in letters by many writers as "statesman" and to his proposals as "statesmanlike."

I could go on with columns of like surprising things that have followed his crisis-inspired writings. Not all of them could be "coincidences." The foregoing story is here told because to hide that light "under a bushel" would mean to be remiss in interesting the public in a book which many distinguished men believe is destined to be a signal contribution to the most vital interests of mankind and whose author, while in a great way associated with important men in great and beneficent moves, in some of which he has been the actual leader, has hid himself from public view.

What others say of his writings and works will be told next Sunday.

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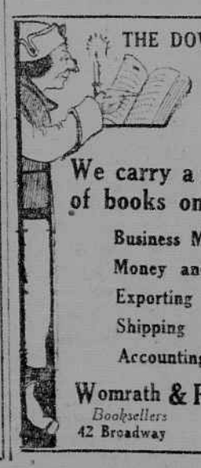

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